

May 6, 2019



# Nurses Week: Recognizing Nurses as Crucial to Health Care

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**Milton, FL-** Across Florida, there are thousands of nurses with a passion and commitment to care for others in their greatest times of need. They are the compassionate faces at the bedside and the healing hands that work tirelessly to ensure that each patient, adult or child, receives safe, quality health care.

This week, May 6 through May 12, the Florida Department of Health in Santa Rosa (DOH-Santa Rosa) is joining partners across the community to celebrate National Nurses Week and highlight the diverse ways nurses are working to improve health care. Today, there are more than 400,000 nursing professionals in Florida who play a vital role in maintaining the health of Floridians.

"I am very proud of the work our nurses do every day, promoting healthy lifestyle choices and educating the community on the importance of preventive measures such as vaccines and physical activity. They make a difference not only in the lives of our patients, but in the quality of life for our community, as well," said Barbara McMillion, BSN, MS, director of nursing for DOH-Santa Rosa.

## Nursing: The Most Trusted Profession in the Country

Nurses make up a large portion of Florida's health care workforce. Almost everyone has had an interaction with a nurse, whether it be in a hospital, health clinic, private practice, home care setting or school environment where nurses are often the primary caregivers and patient advocates.

According to [Gallup's 2018 Honesty and Ethics Survey](#), more than four in five Americans (84%) rate the honesty and ethical standards of nurses as "very high" or "high," earning them the top spot among a diverse list of professions for the 17th consecutive year. With the exception of 2001, when firefighters were on the list after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, nurses have far outpaced all other professions since their addition to the list two decades ago.

Governor DeSantis recently signed two proclamations acknowledging the importance and efforts of Florida's nurses in [health care](#) and [school settings](#).

## **School Nurses Vital to Student Health, In and Out of School**

DOH-Santa Rosa also recognizes Wednesday, May 8 as School Nurse Day- a day to recognize Florida's more than 1,178 registered professional school nurses for the important work they do on behalf of students. School nurses are an essential component to the health and well-being of students, particularly those with acute and chronic health conditions.

Leslie Adams, RN, BSN, NCSN, nursing program specialist with the DOH-Santa Rosa School Health Program said, "We have five nurses, including myself, who cover the 35 schools in our county and provide services to over 29,000 students. It can be a challenge, but our school nurses love what they do and are dedicated to providing the best care to our students. We work closely with the health support techs in the schools to provide vision, hearing, and scoliosis screenings as well as nursing assessments and case management."

During the 2017-2018 school year, Florida's school health nurses served more than 2.8 million students and supervised more than 25 million services to keep Florida's students safe and healthy while at school. For many of these students, without nursing services, attendance would decrease, or students would be unable to attend school.

## **About the Florida Department of Health**

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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